3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

343
417
481
285
415

8. A well-filled grain store

342
415
516
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301
243

[facing page 48]

9. Winnowing

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

their relations may dig them out, and place them in some other country.) And they throw them to the back of the cave, and take the corpse and lay it on top of them. Then they begin to fill in, the ones in the cave are groaning, "Alas, alas!" When they have finished filling in, they go to the water to bathe. When they return to the village they dance.

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XV

THE CHIEF OF THE KUKA AND THE SON-IN-LAW

I. The chief of the *Kuka* hut and his son-in-law once hoed a garden. When the maize grew up, the father-in-law told his son-in-law to build a watch-tower. Then the father-in-law went off and forged some arrow-heads, and gave them to his son-in-law, saying, "There are some arrows, you must keep a look-out with them in the garden here." And the son-in-law received the arrows, and remained at the watch-tower there. One day the wind came and flattened down all the maize, and his father-in-law came to walk on a round of inspection in the garden, and then he saw that the wind had laid the maize, and he clapped his hands and said, "Oh, to-day I see wonders, those arrow-heads I just forged for him to keep by him [and look at]." And then he went up to the watch-tower, where his son-in-law was, and asked him, saying, "Those arrow-heads I forged, I just forged that you might sleep with them on the watch-tower here?" And the son-

606 539 [243]

/10 cont'd/

504 after moving other beans out of a hole. A boys' game played in the wet season is played with egg-shaped pieces of mud, with a small flange at one end. These pieces are thrown down on to the water, and ought to make an explosive noise.

/11/ VII

243 [221] Maize, the main crop, is planted with the first steady rains in November, and is harvested soon after the end of the rains in April or May. Under the influence of the Agricultural Department of the [242] Government, planting in small ridges following the contour is increasingly practised, but prior to the introduction of this and other new agricultural methods in the 1930s, planting was carried out in mounds about three feet in diameter and eighteen inches high. Finger millet is grown on patches of soil on which branches and garden 241 trash have been burnt. However, the citemene system, as known in other parts of the country, in which trees are felled over a wide area and burnt to fertilise a small area in the middle, is not practised as a principal method here. Finger millet is the only crop to be planted solely in ash fertilised patches, while the rest of the cleared ground may be planted with beans and nuts, and in the following season, with maize. Gardens last from two up to twenty or more years, depending on the type of soil, and the selection of a garden site is determined to some extent by the nature of the soil and of the vegetation growing on it.

244 In seepage areas, dry season gardens can be cultivated, and it is in such gardens, fenced in to keep out straying animals, that vegetables are grown for sale to Europeans and in the villages. These sites are also used for early planted maize, which is harvested in January and eaten in the form of green mealies. In the villages [249] themselves, small plots of tobacco and castor oil are grown on old hut sites, while abandoned village sites are used as subsidiary gardens for maize and other crops. Mango, banana, and pawpaw trees are 245 found in villages and on the sites of abandoned villages.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901·
FR5 Ngoni FR5

condition. It helped to maintain the comparatively high morality of the people. And it was never allowed to go to the extremes that the Tonga or others went to when a single chief would have 100 wives. The expensiveness of marriage put a limit on a man's matrimonial ambitions. Yet polygamy was essentially an evil custom. It was based on sensuality and on indolence. And when Christianity comes bringing industry, and self-restraint, it must disappear.

In the old days the chiefs would not allow the men to marry till they were over thirty, and the women were strong and full grown. This preserved the splendid physique of the tribe. But now the laxer customs of the Central Africans is telling on the Ngoni, and one of our hardest tasks is to absolutely refuse marriage to couples whom we think to be too young for this serious responsibility. I have a marriage service every Tuesday, at which I usually unite eight or ten couples in holy wedlock. But these have first of all to come to me that I must judge by appearance, for they cannot tell their ages, whether they have reached the stature of manhood and womanhood. Then if I am satisfied the banns are published and they are married.

But before a man has reached this stage, he must first pay his father-in-law a dowery for his daughter. The value of the dowery varies, according to the rank of the family into which he would marry. The daughter of a chief might be worth to her father as much as twenty cattle, while a slave might only receive two or three goats This also was a great restraint on early marriages, for a man could not marry until he had time to gain a little wealth, and pay for his wife.

The position of a wife of an aristocrat was one of considerable ease and dignity. She had to work certainly, but she had also a considerable following of slaves to assist her in her labours. But the position of the wives of the commoners was little better than that of slaves. When the rains came on the husband sallied out with his wives. He sat on an ant hill and snuffed, and from this exalted position directed the labours of his wives who hoed.

In this the Ngoni were less noble than their neighbours, for many of the surrounding people think it is a disgrace to send the woman to the gardens. When the harvesting came, the women went to the gardens and reaped and carried home the grain, while the husband prepared the barns. And women pounded the grain and cooked it. While the men had the pleasure of eating it.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

The art of cultivating the ground is only now being learned by the Ngoni. Formerly this was the work of the slaves. The masters know how to kill not to till. The soil is fairly rich though not nearly so fertile as what is found at the lake shore and in the deep valleys between. Maize is the great crop. But owing to the devastation of locusts for several years in succession, the Ngoni have learned to plant also reserve gardens of kasava, for the locusts and drought can scarcely affect this crop. A great variety of vegetables is cultivated, peas, beans, tomatoes, pumpkins, and so on. I have counted a variety of twenty-two different vegetables in the gardens beside one village.

These vegetables are used as relish, but the staple food is always maize porridge, and a tasty dish it is. The maize is well cleaned, ground into a fine flour, and when cooked by a clever woman makes a most tempting dish of white porridge. The relish may consist of a piece of stewed fowl or goat, or well boiled vegetable. The greatest dainty that was ever offered to me was a dish of lovely maize porridge with relish of stewed caterpillars. I did without the relish on that occasion. An interesting thing about these caterpillars is that they live on the top of trees, and the natives, to get at them, will hew down the tree. You can see how delicate a dish it makes if every caterpillar in the dish has been got at the cost of a tree. They take the place of the old European dish of peacocks cooked in their feathers.

No native thinks he has eaten until he has had his porridge. A missionary whom I know once unwisely gave a feast to his elders, feeding them on European food. They ate till they could eat no more, then stretching themselves, and after politely expressing their satisfaction by audible sounds of satiety, they rose and and said, "We must now go home to our porridge."

The maize and vegetables are grown with very little trouble, but there is also a species of millet which is largely cultivated, and at great cost to the country. The ground has to be carefully prepared, trees are hewn down in the hot season, and left to dry up in the blazing sun. The whole patch of garden is covered over with these trees and the branches, then when the first clouds appear, the wood is fired. For a day it blazes, and then during the gathering of the clouds the atmosphere is thick with the smoke of burning trees. The rains come and wash the carbon into the soil, and it makes an excellent fertiliser. But the crop exhausts the ground in two or three years, so another patch of

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

243 forest is cut down and burnt, and another garden cultivated, and so the country is rapidly being deforested. The crop is largely used to make a heady beer, and although Central Africa has been happily saved from the curse of European liquor, the native beer is a great source of big drunken bouts. Heavy drinking, however, does not bring the evil effects that brandy drunkenness would entail. The drink is a nutritious and a very sustaining food. I know some of the old chiefs who are drunk almost every day of their lives by midday, yet they bear up wonderfully. But these drunken bouts, when whole villages run riot, are the source of nearly all quarrels, adultery, bloodshed, and every outburst of passion. We have had to denounce the beer drinking as a menace to the social order of the country, and for lack of the strong restraint of the British Government, which forbids the cutting down of trees, we have preached against the deforesting of the land as a wicked improvidence. The native church has, of its own initiative, taken up the question, and enjoined on the members total abstinence, and the preservation of the forests.

Three or four months labour are sufficient to provide a family with food for the year, and the sale of a sheep or a heifer will buy all the clothes the family requires. There is therefore little necessity to work, and the tendency is to spend the months lounging about the village, talking and trifling. Now, happily a more industrious period is waking, and larger ambitions for cloth and for stock, are drawing out the men to work. As a mission we insist on the duty of labour, we refuse church privileges to a man if he cannot show that he has been engaged for some months each year at some labour centre doing honest work. No moral good is ever effected by pampering African pride and indolence, and one of the first lessons Christianity has to teach the native, is the dignity of labour, and the absolute necessity for the labourer to be industrious and honest in the discharge of his work. A penny a day is the ordinary wage we give a labourer, and even the great majority of my 220 teachers do not receive more than 1/6 a month.

Of course many of the Central Africans have industries of their own, smelting, basket making, cloth weaving, wire pulling, and so on. But the Ngoni were a handless people until they got a spear in their hand. Then they drew themselves up as men, and defied the universe. Yet this martial life had an ennobling effect on them. It is a curious thing to notice, and a fact which was